

Kissinger Strongest Hint to

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A world that is in many ways more complex than previous American chief executives ever faced will confront Gerald Ford—as President, and, automatically, the leader of the West.

The world knows very little of Ford, less than of any President since Harry S. Truman, but no time is allotted for on-the-job learning.

He had inherited an era of negotiation from President Nixon, in place of an era of confrontation, but the dividing line between the two is by no means as uncrossable as the Nixon administration intended. The “structure of peace” is still more a sketch than an edifice, even though the age of constant crisis has been notably blunted.

As President, Ford must begin immediately to grapple with relationships with the Soviet Union and with China that are still in a hazy, transitional stage.

In the Middle East an explosive Arab-Israeli war has been dampened with consid-

erable American initiative, ens to burst into flame without that conflict still threaten the application of constant, effective diplomacy.

The world energy supply-price squeeze, accelerated by the Middle East war, has escalated into a global economic crisis for all the nations of the world, threatening to bankrupt many of them with unprecedented economic burdens.

Relations among Western allies, severely strained during the ill-fated “year of Europe,” have been patched up considerably in recent weeks, but interlocking military-political-economic differences remain.

Dozens of other problems are scattered across the international horizon, from potential shift of U.S. policy toward Cuba to the continuing risk of widened warfare in Vietnam where American support remains heavily invested even though the troops are out.

Perhaps above all, the United States itself faces a major internal debate about just what it means by East-

West detente, and how far and how fast it should go in curbing arms, and doing business, with the world's second superpower, the Soviet Union.

By meeting first yesterday with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, before presidential power was passed to him, Ford symbolically registered his esteem for Kissinger and his reliance on the secretary for continuity in the conduct of American foreign policy.

As Vice President, Ford extolled Kissinger as “the greatest Secretary of State in our history,” indicating that he will rely on him heavily.

Their highly-publicized meeting yesterday produced the expected declaration from Mr. Ford that he enjoys working with Secretary Kissinger and has supported the foreign policy carried

out by Kissinger, a prelude to the formal announcement that he will retain Kissinger as Secretary of State.

Allies and adversaries will search, however, beyond the Ford-Kissinger relationship, for the qualities, debits and credits, that Ford personally will bring to the control of American policy, which can never be totally delegated to any subordinate.

This record is extremely sparse in supplying any clues about Ford's independent approach to world issues, beyond his constant support of Nixon administration policies.

The most persistent theme in Ford's voting record in Congress, and in his statements as congressman or vice president, that indicates any special emphasis is on maintenance of strong American military power. This record is being cited with disquiet by organiza-

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tions which advocate considerably reduced American military spending, while others are quite pleased by the pro-defense stand.

One apprehensive group, SANE, said yesterday that "Mr. Ford's public statements reinforce the impression that he rarely sees alternatives to continued military momentum."

This group noted that in an interview published by the magazine *Sea Power*, in March, Ford said that unless there is an agreement with the Soviet Union on limiting offensive strategic nuclear weapons, he favors considerable American arms devel-

In the interview, Ford said:

"I would certainly move forward on the Trident submarine; I would advocate, certainly, investigation as to the feasibility of mobile land-based missiles. I think

we should proceed with the B-1 (bomber). We certainly couldn't remain static with just the programs we have. We'd probably have to accentuate research, development, procurement and deployment of all those. With a new factor, maybe, of mobile land-based missiles.

"I think we've got to maintain a task force of sufficient size in the Med (Mediterranean) to be a deterrent. Now, I think also that we've got to actively explore the desirability of having an Indian Ocean Fleet.

"I'm very much opposed to unilateral reduction of American forces in NATO. I believe there is a good prospect for an equitable downward reduction agreed to by the Soviet Union, its allies, ourselves, and our allies."

These views do not provide clear indication, however, about where Mr. Ford will come down in the pro-

jected national debate on U.S.-Soviet detente policy which Secretary of Kissinger was scheduled to open yesterday before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

State Department officials said yesterday that Kissinger plans to proceed with his presentation at an early date in the new administration, using his statement as a major takeoff point for national discussion.

In a celebrated statement at the close of the American-Soviet summit talks in Moscow on July 3, Kissinger said, speaking of the search for a strategic arms accord:

"If we have not reached an agreement well before 1977, then I believe you will see an explosion of technology and an explosion of numbers at the end of which we will be lucky if we have the present stability; in which it will be impossible

to describe what strategic superiority means.

"And one of the questions which we have to ask ourselves as a country is what in the name of God is strategic superiority? What is the significance of it, politically, militarily, operationally, at these levels of numbers? What do you do with it?"

One special advantage held by Ford, his ability as a legislator to produce compromises for administration programs, can face an early test in the foreign policy area, on this key issue of detente policy.

The Nixon administration for nearly two years has been balked in Congress by demands championed by Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) for Soviet concessions on permitting Jewish emigrants to leave that country, as a price for granting the Soviet Union trade and credit benefits.